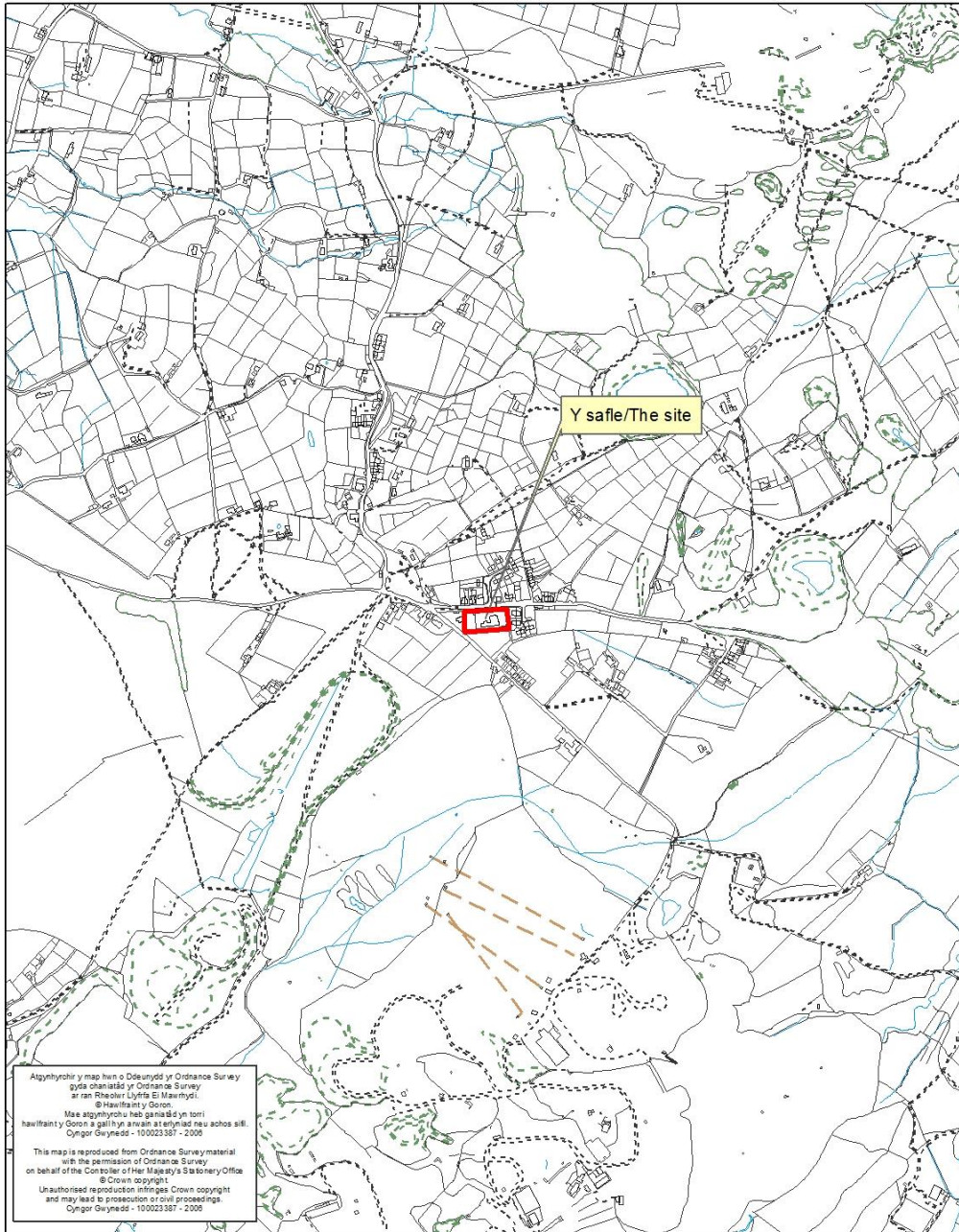


Number: 5.5



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C16/0337/17/LL

Cynllun lleoliad ar gyfer adnabod y safle yn unig. Dim i raddfa.
Location Plan for identification purposes only. Not to scale.



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Application Number: C16/0337/17/LL
Date Registered: 15/04/2016
Application Type: Full - Planning
Community: Llandwrog
Ward: Talysarn

Proposal: APPLICATION FOR THE CHANGE OF USE, EXTENSION AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS THAT COMPRISE THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS ON THE FORMER PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CREATE A COMMUNITY CENTRE, 16 BED HOSTEL/BUNKHOUSE, CAFE, SHOP, EXTERNAL CHANGING AREA, MEETING ROOMS/BUSINESS INCUBATOR UNIT AND A TREATMENT ROOM.

Location: YSGOL GYNRADD BRON Y FOEL, Y FRON, CAERNARFON, GWYNEDD LL54 7BB

Summary of the Recommendation:

TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

1. Description:

1.1 This is a full application for the change of use, extension and external alterations that comprise the installation of solar panels on a section of the existing roof that would see the former Primary School changing to be a multi-use Community Centre with 16 bed hostel accommodation, cafe, shop, meeting rooms, business incubator unit and a treatment room.

1.2 The building is located in the centre of the rural village of Y Fron, with a public highway running past the northern boundary, a public playing field is parallel to the western boundary, the playing field of the former school is south and a public footpath runs along the eastern boundary. There are various surrounding residential dwellings, both in size and form, in all directions.

1.3 The proposal involves undertaking the alterations and the reuse of the former Bron y Foel primary school building for multi-use as already noted. For clarity, the details are as follows:

- New pitched roof extension on the main elevation of the existing building in order to create the main access
- Sun lounge extension at the rear of the building
- Creation of parking areas
- Bicycle Storage/cleaning area
- Landscaping
- Secure storage
- Installation of solar pv panels
- Installation of two external air heat pumps
- Within the building it is proposed to include the following within the existing building space:
Shop, meeting/consultation room, community rooms, kitchen and cafe, four bedrooms with community kitchen, changing/wash rooms

1.4 The following information was submitted with the application:

- Access Assessment
- Structural Assessment
- Survey of protected species
- Design and Access Statement (although it is not a requirement for this to be included now)

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2. Relevant Policies:

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

2.2 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but must also take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the "sustainable development principle", as set out in the 2015 Act, and in making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed decision.

2.3 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:

POLICY B10 – PROTECT AND ENHANCE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AREAS - Protect and enhance Landscape Conservation Areas by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at avoiding significant harm to recognised features.

POLICY B20 – SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS THAT ARE INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT - Refuse proposals which are likely to cause disturbance or unacceptable damage to protected species and their habitats unless they conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features of the site.

POLICY B22 – BUILDING DESIGN - Promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment.

POLICY B23 – AMENITIES - Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

Policy B24 – Adapting and extending buildings within development boundaries, rural villages and the countryside - Ensure that proposals for adaptations or extensions to buildings conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the character and amenity value of the local area.

POLICY B25 – BUILDING MATERIALS - Safeguard the visual character by ensuring that building materials are of a high standard and are in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

POLICY B27 – LANDSCAPING PLANS - Ensuring that permitted proposals incorporate soft/hard landscaping of high standard which is appropriate for the site and which takes into consideration a series of factors aimed at avoiding damage to recognised features.

POLICY C4 – ADAPTING BUILDINGS FOR RE-USE – Proposals to adapt buildings for re-use rather than demolish them will be approved provided they conform to specific criteria relating to the suitability of the building, visual considerations, design and the effect on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages.

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POLICY C7 – BUILDING IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER - Proposals for new developments or for adapting and changing the use of land or buildings will be refused unless consideration is given to specific environmental matters. Proposals must conform to specific criteria relating to building in a sustainable manner, unless it can be demonstrated that it is impractical to do so.

POLICY CH30 – ACCESS FOR ALL – Refuse proposals for residential/business/industrial units or buildings/facilities for public use unless it can be shown that full consideration has been given to the provision of appropriate access for the widest possible range of individuals.

POLICY CH31 – PROVIDING FOR CYCLISTS – Development proposals which do not provide specific facilities for cycling where there are obvious opportunities for doing so will be refused.

POLICY CH33 – SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS - Development proposals will be approved provided they conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

POLICY CH36 – PRIVATE CAR PARKING FACILITIES - Proposals for new developments, extension of existing developments or change of use will be refused unless off-street parking is provided in accordance with the Council’s current parking guidelines and having given due consideration to the accessibility of public transport, the possibility of walking or cycling from the site and the proximity of the site to a public car park.

POLICY CH37 – EDUCATION, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - Development proposals for new facilities associated with education, health and the community or extensions to existing facilities will be approved provided that they conform with a series of criteria regarding the location of the proposal, its accessibility using different modes of travel, together with highway issues, the design of any new school and the effect on a specific town centre.

POLICY D10 – ADAPTATION OF BUILDINGS FOR INDUSTRIAL OR BUSINESS USE - Proposals to change the use of buildings to small scale industrial or business use will be approved provided the chosen location can be justified and they conform to specific criteria regarding the scale and nature of the development and the relationship of the development with nearby buildings/uses.

POLICY D13 – ATTRACTIONS AND FACILITIES – Proposals for the development of new attractions and facilities for visitors, or to improve the standard of existing facilities will be approved if they are located within a development boundary or on other specific sites if there are no suitable opportunities within a development boundary. It will be a requirement that each proposal conforms to the criteria regarding the development of ‘niche’ markets or to support the development of the recognised Gwynedd Tourism Strategy theme and also the design, appearance and setting of the proposed development.

POLICY D14 SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMATION New proposals or adaptations of existing buildings or extensions to existing holiday accommodation establishments will be approved if the design, setting and appearance of the development is of high standard and if it conforms to the criteria regarding the location and scale of the development.

In addition to the above, relevant consideration is given to the following:

Supplementary Planning Guidance - Converting Buildings in Open Countryside and in Rural Villages - November 2009

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Supplementary Planning Guidance – Holiday Accommodation – July 2011

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 8, 2016

Technical Advice Note 12: Design

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 Application number C01A/0247/17/R3 - extension to create a storeroom - approved 13.07.01

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council:	Not received
Transportation Unit:	No objection since the proposal would have no detrimental effect on any road.
Natural Resources Wales:	Standard advice
Welsh Water:	Observations and standard conditions.
Public Protection Unit:	Not received
Rights of Way Unit:	Need to safeguard the nearby public footpath
Biodiversity Unit:	Need to follow the recommendation of the survey of protected species
Public Consultation:	<p>A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertising period has expired and correspondence has been received objecting on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Unsuitable access • A detrimental effect on the amenities of nearby residents • Misleading information • Noise • Detrimental impact on the Welsh language • Unacceptable increase in traffic • Road safety • Isolated location • Light pollution <p>As well as the objections noted above, objections were received which were not valid planning objections which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devaluing nearby housing • Health and Safety issues • Lack of justification for such a large investment

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Correspondence was received supporting / providing observations on the application on the grounds of:

- It would be beneficial to the village and the nearby area

5. Assessment of the relevant planning considerations:

5.1 The principle of the development

5.1.1 Policy C4 relates to adapting buildings to be reused. This policy approves such proposals provided that specific criteria can be met relating to the suitability of the building for the proposed use, visual considerations and that the design respects the original building and its surrounding area. It is suggested that they should be altered without substantial re-building work and they should not disperse activities on such a scale as to harm the vitality of towns and villages.

5.1.2 A structural report has been submitted and it states that the building is structurally sound. On the above basis, it is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the relevant requirements of policy C4. The building is substantial and is located within a fairly substantial curtilage (namely the former school yard) which includes an existing vehicular entrance and parking spaces. It is considered that the building is suitable for the proposal in terms of the proposed use, and that the proposal does not entail having to make major changes to the building or extend its curtilage. The proposed external alterations including the extensions as shown, respect the structure, form and character of the original building and that they are unlikely to cause significant damage to the visual quality and character of the surrounding area.

5.1.3 The building is not listed, and the main alterations (apart from the extensions) will be made to the inside the building. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of the relevant criteria of policy C4. The proposal offers an use for a former school and community building that are partly empty and the use is an opportunity to secure the long-term use of the building. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with the relevant requirements of policy C4 above.

5.1.4 Policy D13 of the UDP relates to the provision of attractions and facilities and proposals to develop attractions and facilities for visitors, or to improve the standard of existing facilities if they are located within a development boundary or on other specific sites if there are no suitable opportunities within a development boundary. It will be a requirement that each proposal conforms to the criteria regarding the development of 'niche' markets or to support the development of the recognised Gwynedd Tourism Strategy theme and also the design, appearance and setting of the proposed development. In this case, the proposal entails the reuse of an existing building, and it therefore complies with the first part of the policy relating to locating developments of this type. Policy D10 approves the change of use of buildings for a new small scale business use, and in this case it can be seen that only a small portion of the building will change its use in the actual sense of the word, as the building's established use will continue to comply with the new proposal namely the element of community use.

5.1.5 In considering the suitability of enterprises to develop new attractions and facilities the relevant document is the Destination Management Plan 2013-2010 (May 2013) and this plan notes the need to address a range of matters that include improved facilities for visitors, improved public facilities and high quality visitor attractions.

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The proposed development includes serviced accommodation that is simple and purposeful, along with a shop and café that will be open to the public and available for community activities. The proposal uses and will adapt an existing building without any substantial external changes. Therefore, on the above basis, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy D10 and D13.

- 5.1.6 Policy D14 relates to providing serviced holiday accommodation, and states that adaptations to existing buildings will be approved if the design, setting and appearance of the development is of a high standard and if it conforms to the criteria regarding the location and scale of the development. The proposal is to convert an existing building for varied use including to create serviced holiday accommodation. The building is a former school, and there is a substantial curtilage linked to the building that has a vehicular entrance and sufficient parking spaces and a turning space. The scale of the development has been designed with consideration to the original building and the size of the surrounding curtilage. The site is located within the rural village of Y Fron with various residential dwellings scattered around it as well as open playing grounds. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of scale, location and the settlement in question and is of a high standard and therefore it complies with all of the requirements of the above mentioned policy.

5.2 Visual amenities

- 5.2.1 Policy B10 relates to protecting and enhancing landscape conservation areas by ensuring that proposals must conform to a series of criteria aimed at avoiding significant damage to recognised features. In this case, the proposal involves converting a former school for a variety of uses including a shop, community space, hostel and cafe. The proposal involves undertaking changes to the external elevations including erecting two extensions and also solar panels. Within the existing curtilage it is proposed to park cars, store bins, landscaping etc. The location of the site is not within the protected area, however, it does completely surround it and therefore it is believed that consideration needs to be given to the impact on the landscape due to its proximity to the protected area.
- 5.2.2 The site contains a substantial and characteristic building, however, it is considered that the proposal and the proposed work, including erecting the extensions and the external finishes, are suitable and unlikely to cause a detrimental impact on the protected landscape as well as the general visual amenities of the village. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policies B10, B22, B25 and B27.

5.3 General and residential amenities

- 5.3.1 It is recognised that residential dwellings surround the site, together with various other dwellings dispersed further away from the site. Under the building's current class use (D1), the building can be used as it is for a number of community uses, such as a hall, clinic, health centre, crèche, gallery, museum, library or education centre to name a few, without requiring any planning permission. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal is likely to cause any significant or unacceptable impact or any other additional effect on the amenities of the local residents compared with the existing situation or that may occur on the site without the need for further planning permission. During the inspection visit by officers it was seen that a section of the building had been used as a Polling Station for the recent Assembly elections.

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5.3.2 The building's curtilage is quite substantial and is sufficient to provide parking spaces and turning space for the development. It is not considered that the proposal before you is likely to cause any substantial unacceptable detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residents in terms of its use or traffic flow, particularly when comparing the proposed use with the current legal use of the building as a school, or when comparing it with the other legal uses that could be made of the building without planning permission such as a children's nursery, a surgery, health centre or museum. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy B23.

5.4 **Transport and access matters**

5.4.1 Work has already been undertaken in the form of an Access Survey including an evaluation of the proposed plan in terms of accessibility matters. Recommendations are suggested in order to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act. Therefore, it is believed that access has been fully assessed and the requirements of policy CH30 are satisfied.

5.4.2 From the proposed plans it can be seen that the external area is provided for the storage and to clean bicycles, via this the requirements of policy CH31 are satisfied.

5.4.3 The Highways Unit has no objection to the proposal, based on access and associated parking provision. The existing access to the site has an extensive yard that will be used to park vehicles. The last use as a school is likely to be of greater density at times compared to what is proposed here in terms of traffic movement. It is not deemed that there is any basis to oppose the proposal in terms of traffic issues and this has been fully assessed by the Unit. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of Policies CH33 and CH36.

5.5 **Biodiversity matters**

5.5.1 A standard assessment has been conducted to find out if any protected species make use of the building, particularly since it stopped being used as a primary school. No traces were found within the building and therefore the Biodiversity Unit confirms that they are of the view that the proposal is acceptable in terms of this aspect and is therefore considered to comply with the requirements of policy B20.

5.6 **Sustainability matters**

5.6.1 It is proposed to install a row of solar pv panels on the building's existing roof which is in a southerly direction, this section of the building looks over the former school's playing field and the panels are not deemed to have any impact on nearby dwellings.

5.6.2 In addition, two air heating pumps will be installed within the site this will also contribute towards a positive impact in terms of sustainability matters. The building's external walls will be rendered with external insulation that will ensure better insulation for the whole building. It is deemed that these elements are acceptable as shown and by their inclusion, the requirements of policy C7 will be satisfied.

5.7 **Community benefit**

5.7.1 Although it is believed (as noted above) that there is some current community use made of this building, this proposal is being submitted on behalf of a local community development group and includes a formal internal space for community use.

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5.7.2 Policy CH37 states that development proposals for new community facilities or extensions to existing facilities will be approved provided they conform to a series of criteria. In this case, it is considered that this has succeeded and therefore the proposal complies with the requirements of policy C37.

5.8 Response to the public consultation

5.8.1 A number of objections and comments were received in relation to this application. Concerns were highlighted regarding the impact of the proposed development on a number of various matters, including the impact on the residential amenities of nearby residents.

5.8.2 Paragraph 3.1.8 of Planning Policy Wales states: *"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities must take into account any relevant view on planning matters expressed by neighbouring occupiers, local residents and any other third parties. Whilst the substance of local views must be considered, the duty is to decide each case on its planning merits. As a general principle, local opposition or support for a proposal is not, on its own, a reasonable ground for refusing or granting a planning permission. Objections or support must be based on valid planning considerations."*

5.8.3 Objections have also been received noting the detrimental impact of the proposed development on the Welsh language. The Local Planning Authority has created Supplementary Planning Guidance which notes the thresholds for the type and size of developments that should be assessed against their impact on the Welsh language. This type of development does not comply with the thresholds for submitting such an assessment.

5.8.4 Full consideration has been given to all the relevant planning observations that were received in assessing this application.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 Having considered the above and all the relevant matters including the local and national policies and guidance, together with the observations and responses received, it is believed that this application as described is acceptable and complies with the requirements of the relevant policies noted above.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 To approve – with conditions

1. Time
2. Comply with plans
3. Materials
4. Low profile solar panels
5. Café's opening hours.
6. Welsh Water conditions
7. Protect the public footpath
8. Need to follow the bat survey recommendations
9. Note by Natural Resources Wales